

318 LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

[Acr II

*Airs. Erlynne.* Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

*Parker.* No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Starts, and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression in her face.] Out of the house?

*Parker.* Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for iis lordship on the table.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* A letter for Lord Windermere ?

*Parker.* Yes, madam.

*31rs. Erlynne.* Thank you. [Exit Parker. The music in the ball-room stops.] Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [Goes over to bureau and, looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.]

No,

no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me?

Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [Tears

open and reads it> then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.] Oh, how terrible! The same words that twenty

years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now I [Still seated R.

*Enter Lord Windermere LUE.*

*Lord Windermere.* Have you said good-night to my wife ?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Crushing letter in Jier hand.] Yes. [Comes C.

*Lord Windermere.* Where is she ?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

*Lord Windermere.* I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Rising hurriedly.] Oh, no! - It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [Drops letter.] She asked me to tell you.

*Lord Windermere.* [Picks up letter^ You have dropped something.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* Oh yes, thank you, that is mine.

*Lord Windermere.* [Still looking at letter^ But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Takes the letter quickly^ Yes, it's —an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?